

Spending cap at county home

Gil de Rubio: Patients' needs will be met

By AARON ALDRIDGE
Staff Writer

A moratorium has been placed on spending at the Sullivan County Nursing Home in response to a \$58,974 deficit for the month of March, according to County Manager



Unity

Ed Gil de Rubio.

"Except for essential operating costs, I've asked the department heads to put off any nonessential expenses until the new fiscal year," Gil de Rubio said.

This doesn't mean residents will go without food, toiletries or the medical care they need, Gil de Rubio said.

"This is in response to having to borrow money this early in the year," Sullivan County Commissioner Jeff Barrette said. "We usually borrow money in July."

According to Barrette, the county has routinely been extended an annual credit line of up to \$5 million in anticipation of tax revenue to cover expenses. Last year the county borrowed the money in June and this year a \$2 million credit line was extended on April 16.

Barrette was clear that just because the credit line has been extended, it doesn't mean the county will use the money.

In December, the county was

See CAP - Page A8

CAP FROM PAGE A1

extended a \$500,000 credit line to cover expenses, but the money was never needed and never used, according to Barrette.

The fiscal year for the county ends June 30 and Barrette said the budget is very tight.

"We had an aggressive budget this year and it will be darn close to even," Barrette said. "I would like to go into fiscal '07 with a clean slate."

The current deficit has been blamed not only on an aggressive budget but also on a lack of patients.

The facility currently has 146 of 156 beds filled. The problem, according to Sullivan County Health Care administrator Scott Wojkiewicz, is not with the number of patients but with the type of patients at the home.

Medicare A, which can pay as much as four times the amount for the \$140 per day allotted for a Medicaid patient, is only at 55 percent of the projected budget.

Wojkiewicz also believes the budget this year was over-aggressive, but thinks next year the budget will be less aggressive.

Gil de Rubio said he is working on the budget and plans to do a cash-flow analysis.

Aaron Aldridge can be reached at (800) 545-0347 ext. 139, or by e-mail at aaldridge@eagletimes.com.